

## Curriculum

*PLT* isn't just about forests. It provides educators with curriculum materials that help students understand the **total** environment – land, air, and water.

Activities and materials address issues fairly and honestly and do not advocate any one particular point of view.

*PLT* works well in both rural and urban environments.

The *PLT* curriculum is built around **five themes**. Activities within each theme guide students through a process which begins with awareness and moves toward understanding. Students will challenge preconceived notions and become motivated to seek constructive avenues for environmental actions. The themes include:

*Diversity* – demonstrating a wide array of habitats, societies, technologies, and cultures

*Interrelationships* – highlighting ecological, technological, and social-cultural systems as interactive and interdependent

*Systems* – teaching how environmental, technological, and social systems are interconnected

*Structure and Scale* – demonstrating how technologies, societal institutions, and components of natural and human-built environments vary

*Patterns of Change* – showing how structures and systems change over time

Each *PLT* secondary module is based on the above themes, but is constructed around a central topic. Activities are based largely on the constructivist learning theory and whole language teaching strategies.

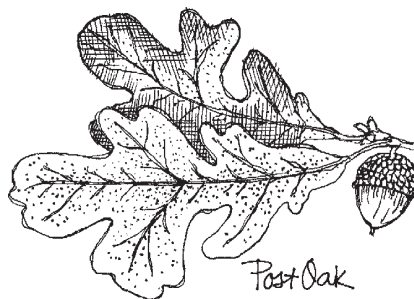
## Background

*Project Learning Tree (PLT)* is an award winning, interdisciplinary environmental education program developed in the early 1970s by the American Forest Foundation in partnership with the Western Regional Environmental Education Council.

*PLT* contains ready-made lessons and activities developed, reviewed, and tested by more than 400 educators and resource professionals. These student-centered activities are useful in all subjects and skills and can be incorporated into classrooms and nonformal educational settings. They require minimum preparation and little, if any, equipment.

Lessons are designed to develop critical thinking skills and teach students “**how**” to think, not “**what**” to think about complex environmental issues. Activities stimulate creativity, originality, and flexibility, and encourage students to become responsible, productive, and participatory members of society.

More than 25 million students worldwide have participated in *PLT* activities through a network of 500,000 trained *PLT* educators. More than 30,000 new educators are introduced to the program each year.



*An award-winning  
environmental education program  
designed for  
pre-kindergarten through 12th  
grade educators*



Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
Updated 2007

## **sponsors**

### *National Level*

American Forest Foundation  
Council for Environmental Education (CEE)

### *State Level*

Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
Iowa Department of Education  
Iowa Assoc. of County Conservation Boards  
Iowa Conservation Education Council  
Iowa Chapter of the Izaak Walton League

### *Local Level*

County Conservation Boards  
Colleges and Universities  
Area Education Agencies

## **aterials**

*PLT* materials are correlated to the national science and social studies standards.

## **Availability**

Materials are available **only** through workshop/training sessions which demonstrate their use (six hours). *PLT* training often is done in conjunction with *WILD/ WILD Aquatic*. Workshops can be held for teachers, scout leaders, camp personnel, and others. You may request a workshop in your area for a group of at least 15 educators/youth leaders.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources also provides training through some 25 college and university science methods classes for pre-service teachers.

More than 10,000 Iowa educators and youth leaders have participated in *Project Learning Tree* workshops.

For information about upcoming workshops, visit our website ([www.iowadnr.gov/education/index.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/education/index.html)) or contact the state office, phone/fax 641/747-2200; Email: AquaticEd\_Info@dnr.iowa.gov.

## **Cost**

A \$15 fee per participant is charged for training to fund the *PLT* program at the state level. This fee includes the *Iowa Supplement to PLT*, *Pre K-8 manual* **or** *Introductory Handbook*, and your choice of one other secondary module. Additional secondary modules may be purchased for \$5 each.

## **Description**

*Iowa Supplement to PLT* – includes Iowa specific information to help make activities more relevant to Iowa students. It is designed to reduce the preparation time needed to do each *PLT* activity and be a quick access to Iowa forestry background information.

### *Elementary*

*Project Learning Tree Pre K-8* – contains more than 90 activities about forests, trees, the interrelationships between organisms and their environment, and other ecological concepts. The guide's numerous appendices and excellent organization makes it very user-friendly.

### *Secondary*

*The Changing Forest: Forest Ecology* – includes activities to help students develop the knowledge needed to comprehend and act on environmental challenges in the future. Before they can tackle global issues such as tropical deforestation or loss of biodiversity, students must first understand the basic terms and

science of forest ecology.

*Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus on Forests* – uses forest-related issues as examples to help students better understand the complexity of environmental issues. Students will examine beliefs and values about forestry issues and will challenge their own thoughts about how forest resources should be used.

*Exploring Environmental Issues: Municipal Solid Waste* – emphasizes the importance of understanding waste management issues and options. Hands-on experiences help show the interrelationships among waste generation, natural resource use, and disposal. Activities guide students through the various waste management strategies and solutions while providing the necessary tools needed to make informed decisions and choices on waste management issues.

*Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus on Risk* – helps students explore the different aspects of environmental and human health risks that affect their everyday lives. It incorporates science, social studies, math, geography, and language arts. Students analyze, explore, discover, and learn about risk assessment, risk communication, risk perception, and risk management. Critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making are stressed throughout the activities

*The Places We Live* provides educators with a useful tool for placed based education to help create a bond between young citizens and their communities. Students will explore current and future community environmental issues, enabling them to make informed decisions about those issues.